

year there has been a rescission, and the money has been shifted to something else. Basically, it becomes a slush fund to be used in the appropriations process and to allow the appropriations to exceed the cap on spending that we all agreed upon.

So that is what happens. Congress willfully creates a number way above what we are going to spend, comes back a little later and says: Oh, my goodness, look at all this leftover money. Well, let's just take it and spend it somewhere else.

It is completely dishonest. It completely misrepresents the CHIP program. It completely misrepresents—in fact, it blatantly violates the spending caps we have established, and it is not trivial. It is not a trivial amount of money. Over the last 8 years, the amount of these rescissions, so it can be spent elsewhere, has added up to 45 billion taxpayer dollars—entirely a gimmick, a device that just allows Congress to lie to the American people about what they are spending.

So that brings us up to last week. The administration comes along and says they have a suggestion for Congress. First of all, let's fully fund the CHIP program. Let's make sure the CHIP program is fully funded. There will be no shortage whatsoever, but let's stop the lying. Let's remove the deception. Let's provide a reasonable amount of excess funding, because I acknowledge at the beginning we don't know right down to the last dollar exactly how much we are going to spend, but let's take aside all of this wild excess.

Let's be honest. Let's rescind now most of the excess funding, which has been going on each and every year separately; let's leave more than enough in the contingency fund. Even though it is extremely unlikely that any of it will be tapped, the administration has proposed \$500 million to be left in the contingency fund. Remember, that is the fund that has been used to the tune of \$108 million over the last 9 years, but they are saying let's leave \$500 million—five times as much as has been spent cumulatively over the last 9 years—and basically send all of this huge, excessive amount back to the Treasury so it is not just spent willy-nilly and irresponsibly.

Now, for some reason, despite the fact that not a single dollar that would have actually been spent on the CHIP program will be spent differently, will not be spent; despite the fact that the CHIP program will not lose a single dollar of actual funding; despite the fact that Congress has been doing this every single year since 2011, as long as it can spend it on something else; despite the fact that 65 Senators, including 40 of my Democratic colleagues, voted to rescind \$6.8 billion from CHIP—how long ago? In March of this year, a few weeks ago, including \$3.1 billion from the contingency fund. So the vast majority of my Democratic colleagues voted to rescind money

from CHIP just earlier this year. Despite that, now we have people up in high dudgeon, wailing and gnashing of the teeth, about how what we are doing would tear CHIP apart—even after what they did in March, by the way—that it is somehow a betrayal, immoral, appalling; it hurts low- and middle-class families.

It would be too generous to suggest this is merely a lapse of memory. Everybody knows what is going on. This is ridiculous.

So I fully support the President's proposal that we fully fund CHIP but stop with the dishonesty in our budgeting. Stop throwing a bunch of money under this category, knowing we are going to go back later and spend it somewhere else. This program shouldn't be pillaged this way to spend money on unrelated things that just allow us to bust the budget cap.

I would go a step further. What the administration has proposed, to their credit, fixes this terrible flaw this year. I would like us to permanently fix it. I have suggested to my colleagues, rather than specifying a dollar amount, since we don't know the precise dollar amount, I would be OK with a provision that says: such sums as will be needed. That would guarantee it would be fully funded, but it would not create this big excess that gets wasted on who knows what.

If the only concern people have is to ensure that the CHIP program will be fully and properly funded, how can they object to that? It would specify, codified in language, that would be exactly what would happen. It would be fully funded, but we have gotten this resistance to that. How could that possibly be? Unless it is that people want to continue this gimmickry, this deception that has been going on for all of these years.

Well, I hope we will be able to work out a long-term solution. I hope we will bring an end to this. I understand my colleagues on the other side want to spend more money. Let's just admit it—admit it, and let's debate it. We have agreed-upon spending caps. I think they are too high, but that is what we agreed upon. We shouldn't be lying to the American people and going through this gimmick yet again.

So I want to state my unequivocal support for the administration's proposal for a rescission package. I would prefer if there were actual spending being cut. This is indirectly going to help reduce excessive spending because it is going after these unobligated funds, it is going after these excessive accounts. It happens in other accounts, but CHIP is the most noteworthy. To me, this is a modest step in the direction of honest budgeting and protecting the taxpayers.

I hope we will be able to have a permanent solution to this soon, but in the meantime, I hope my colleagues will support the administration's rescission package.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

#### EPA ADMINISTRATOR PRUITT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here today for my 206th "Time to Wake Up" speech.

For colleagues who may be having a hard time keeping up with the ethical scandals swirling around Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, I thought today I would lay them out one by one.

I think we all heard Donald Trump's pledge to drain the swamp and to put an end to government corruption. That hasn't exactly worked out; has it? Instead, swamp creatures abound, and Pruitt, a longtime enemy of the Agency he now runs and a longtime toady of the fossil fuel industry he is supposed to regulate, is absolutely wallowing in the swamp. Indeed, he is so swampy that he now faces more than a dozen Federal and State probes exploring how he has been advancing his own interests and those of his polluter donors. So let's take a look.

Investigation No. 1 is travel expenses. Between March and May of 2017—just that short period—Mr. Pruitt spent 43 out of those 92 days traveling to his home State of Oklahoma. Pruitt appears to have conducted little or no official business on many of these trips. Yet taxpayers still picked up the tab.

Last summer the EPA inspector general opened its inquiry into this use of official resources. That inquiry has actually since been expanded to examine the overall frequency, cost, and extent of the Administrator's travel. Over a 6-month period in 2017, Pruitt is estimated to have racked up nearly \$200,000 in travel expenses. This includes a \$7,000 business-class flight to Italy and \$58,000 spent on military and charter flights. One set of flights to Oklahoma on a chartered private jet cost over \$14,000 alone.

Also under scrutiny is a 4-day trip that Mr. Pruitt, his staff, and his security detail took to Morocco in December. I hear it is lovely in Morocco in December, but it cost taxpayers more than \$100,000 to indulge Mr. Pruitt. EPA first justified the trip by saying that Pruitt was there to promote the U.S. liquefied natural gas industry. That is actually not in EPA's mission—but never mind. Pruitt himself then testified before the House that he was there to negotiate part of a free-trade agreement. Again, that is not part of EPA's mission. Plus, there is no evidence that Pruitt even conferred with our Trade Representative. You would think that he might have picked up the phone to give himself just a little bit of cover if that was going to be his story. It was eventually reported that Pruitt's Morocco junket was largely arranged by a lobbyist friend who later was paid \$40,000 a month—\$40,000 a month—retroactively to January 1, to represent the Moroccan Government.

Pruitt's frequent international travel plans are heavily influenced by lobbyists and rightwing donors. His trip to Rome appears to have been largely orchestrated by the head of the Federalist Society, and it included dinner at a five-star hotel with Cardinal George Pell, who has been under investigation for multiple allegations of child sexual assault. The cardinal is a climate denier. So maybe that makes it all OK for Pruitt.

A planned trip to Australia was organized by a consultant and former lobbyist for foreign governments. Another planned trip to Israel appears to have been at least in part scheduled to allow him to promote a water purification company recommended by Republican megadonor Sheldon Adelson. Reports say Pruitt actually gave his staff a bucket list of places he wanted to visit at public expense, and he told them to arrange pretexts for his travels.

A lot of the cost of these trips is Pruitt's security detail. That takes us in to investigation Nos. 2, 3, and 4, which stem from Administrator Pruitt's over-the-top spending on security measures.

The Environmental Protection Agency's inspector general and the House oversight committee are both investigating this spending, including almost \$3 million that Pruitt has spent on his 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, 20-person security detail. This security phalanx accompanies him everywhere—on personal travel home to Oklahoma and on family trips to the Rose Bowl and Disneyland. Pruitt's security detachment is more than three times as large as previous EPA Administrators, none of whom had 24/7 protection. Many of the agents assigned to Pruitt's security team are pulled from EPA's enforcement arm, leaving fewer agents to actually investigate environmental crimes. But they do help him to get to fancy Washington restaurants fast, using lights and sirens to expedite Pruitt's travel to his dinner dates.

Pruitt has also fortified his office. He installed a \$43,000 cone-of-silence, supersecret phone booth. He had biometric locks installed on his office doors and had his office swept for bugs—a no-bid job, by the way, that went to a business partner of the guy who was then his top security agent. The Agency even explored spending \$70,000 on a bulletproof desk for him.

All he is missing is the secret decoder ring.

The evidence that Pruitt cites to justify all of this security spending, including business-class and first-class plane tickets he claimed were required by security concerns, is remarkably thin. When he testified last month before House appropriators, Pruitt claimed that it was all justified by the Agency's inspector general. Well, on Monday, Senator CARPER and I heard directly from the inspector general, and the story is not as Pruitt testified.

Pruitt wanted 24/7 security starting on his first day as Administrator—not as a result of any threats and not be-

cause the inspector general told him that round-the-clock security was justified. The inspector general, in fact, never told him that. It is not the inspector general's job. It looks like Administrator Pruitt misled two House committees when he testified.

Let's move on to investigation No. 5, which involves an inspector general inquiry into a possible violation of anti-lobbying rules. Once you are on the Federal payroll exerting the responsibilities of government, you are not supposed to engage in lobbying. During an April 2017 meeting with the National Mining Association, Pruitt encouraged the group to press President Trump to withdraw from the Paris climate accord. The GAO is also looking into improper lobbying activity after he appeared in a lobbying organization's promotional video, opposing, by the way, the clean water rule. That GAO investigation is investigation No. 6.

Investigation No. 7 concerns an inspector general probe into Pruitt's use of an obscure provision of the Safe Drinking Water Act to circumvent the usual civil service process to hire and promote staff. Pruitt used this loophole to hire lobbyists to oversee EPA functions and to award huge raises to a couple of favorite political aides from his Oklahoma days. He did this even after the White House had rejected those proposed pay increases.

One of Pruitt's closest aides may not have even shown up to work for 3 months. Imagine that—not showing up to work for 3 months despite drawing a nearly \$180,000 salary. That is great work, if you can get it. Incredibly—and I mean that literally—Pruitt testified to the House that he didn't know whether this senior aide was coming to work or not. You would think that after 3 months of not seeing this individual at work, you might have a clue. Well, the EPA inspector general can help the Administrator answer that question in the eighth investigation on the list.

Now, every good swamp creature needs a swamp den, and Scott Pruitt found himself just the place, paying \$50 a night for a luxury Capitol Hill condo co-owned by the wife of an energy lobbyist. Both the EPA's inspector general and the House oversight committee are investigating whether this below-market value housing arrangement constituted an illicit gift. If you have lost track, these are investigations Nos. 9 and 10.

By the way, when the story broke about his swamp den, Pruitt denied that this lobbyist lobbied EPA. Well, it turns out that Federal lobbying disclosures and internal emails show that this lobbyist did in fact lobby EPA, even meeting with Pruitt himself on behalf of an industry client and also pushing Pruitt to name people favored by his client to EPA science advisory boards.

That brings us to investigation No. 11. Pruitt has systemically tilted

EPA's science advisory committees toward his industry donors, replacing academic scientists with industry-tied representatives. The GAO is examining the role that Pruitt's political appointees played in selecting industry-connected members to replace expert scientists on science advisory boards.

Investigation No. 12 is unfolding back home in Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Bar Association is looking into charges that Pruitt lied when he told our Senate Environment and Public Works Committee during his confirmation hearing last year that he had not conducted business using private email addresses as Oklahoma's attorney general. Well, it turns out that it looks like he did. Just last night, news broke that the EPA inspector general is investigating Pruitt's use of private email accounts, including questions of whether the Agency is properly preserving records of the Administrator's private emails and including those records in responses to Freedom of Information Act searches.

That makes the 13th investigation.

So there you have it—a baker's dozen so far of investigations into Pruitt's conduct as EPA Administrator. Those are just the allegations that have ramped up to the level of an official investigation. There are scores of other scandals roiling the EPA. All you have to do is pick up a newspaper, and you will be bombarded by stories of Pruitt's truly swampy behavior. There are thousands of pages of communications between Scott Pruitt and industry when he was attorney general of Oklahoma that the current attorney general of Oklahoma is fighting to prevent the public from seeing. There are millions of dollars of political fundraising by Scott Pruitt from the fossil fuel industry that he has never told us about. If he has withheld disclosures that bear on his conflicts of interest, new investigations could result.

While Scott Pruitt dodges full disclosure of all his swampy industry ties, he has let lobbyists and fossil fuel and chemical industry operatives infiltrate throughout the EPA. The Associated Press found that “nearly half of the political appointees hired at the Environmental Protection Agency under Trump have strong industry ties.” Pruitt rolled back an Obama rule controlling methane leaks after he met with oil executives at the Trump hotel in Washington. Pruitt halted environmental protections for an area in southwest Alaska just hours after meeting with the mining executives looking to dig a mine there. Pruitt's EPA protected an emissions rule loophole for a trucking company shortly after Pruitt met with the company's executives. It is government by “I know a guy,” with Pruitt as the pol-luters' guy.

It is impossible not to notice the odor of self-dealing and corruption emanating from the Scott Pruitt EPA. When I talk about Pruitt with Rhode Islanders, they almost always ask me

the same questions: How does he still have a job? Why hasn't the President fired this guy?

One answer goes back to the President himself. When Pruitt's scandals started to snowball last month, oil and gas magnate Harold Hamm, a billionaire patron of Scott Pruitt's, lobbied President Trump to keep him on. Twenty-two polluter front groups, led by the infamous Heartland Institute, so-called, wrote a letter to President Trump lauding Pruitt's what they call "positive record of reform unmatched by any of Pruitt's predecessors." Who is behind those 22 polluter front groups? Guess what. It is those climate denial champions, the Koch brothers, to the tune of at least \$87 million in funding.

The test in Trumptown is whether Harold Hamm and Charles and David Koch are happy. And they are. Polluters are free to pollute for free, and climate change gets scrubbed out of official communications. Big-spending polluters are happy, happy, happy, and that is why Scott Pruitt remains as EPA Administrator in the Trump swamp.

It doesn't have to be this way. The words of Woodrow Wilson are still true today about legislative oversight. He said:

It is the proper duty of a representative body to look diligently into every affair of government and to talk much about what it sees. It is meant to be the eyes and the voice, and to embody the wisdom and will of its constituents.

Our constituents—my constituents, anyway—are not just the big polluters like Harold Hamm and the Koch brothers. The polluters may have billions to spend in politics, which they do, but they have very different interests than the millions of regular Americans who look to EPA to protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the climate we must inhabit. Where are the eyes and the voice in the present majority for these millions of Americans? Our silence in the face of this flagrant corruption is deafening.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the Senate will soon be taking up my resolution recognizing this month of May as National Foster Care Month.

For over 20 years, National Foster Care Month has been recognized as a time to raise awareness about the challenges that young people in foster care experience and to celebrate their resilience in the face of these obstacles.

There are over 438,000 children in foster care nationwide. In Iowa alone, over 4,000 kids entered foster care in 2016. Due to the opioid crisis, there are more children entering foster care than many child welfare agencies are equipped to handle. In 2016, over 92,000 kids entered foster care due to parental drug abuse.

I salute all of those who dedicate their time and their resources to helping these young people. This induces social workers, advocates, and alumni of the foster care system, who inform lawmakers and the public and, more importantly, who fight to secure better outcomes for these young people in care. Of course, this also includes foster parents, who open their homes and their hearts to children in need.

Without foster parents, children unable to remain with their biological parents would have nowhere to go. Unfortunately, this is becoming a reality for children across the country, as many States are experiencing a critical shortage of foster parents. In my home State of Iowa, many counties are facing a shortage of foster care homes, causing young people to be housed in shelters instead of with families.

The solution is not simply recruiting more people to serve as foster parents. Between 30 and 50 percent of licensed foster parents choose to stop being foster parents after only 1 year of doing that. That is why this year our resolution also designates the single day of May 31 as "Foster Parent Appreciation Day." It is my hope that communities, child welfare agencies, and other organizations will use this day to recognize the sacrifices foster parents make. Those who do not choose to continue being foster parents often report that their reason is a lack of support and training. At a time when foster parents are needed more than ever, it is important for communities and child welfare agencies to support foster parents and ensure that they are trained to help the kids entrusted to them.

Through my work on the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth, I have had the opportunity to hear firsthand what children in foster care need. I would advise Senators to take advantage of listening to that group of people we call foster youth. They need love, they need permanency, and they need stability and support.

In short, all they need is a family. They often express to me: "I would like to have a mom and a dad." That is why I am pleased that Congress recently passed the Family First Prevention Services Act. This legislation works to keep more families together by allowing Federal reimbursement for services to families before children are put in foster care, not afterward. These services include substance abuse treatment and in-home parenting skill programs. When it is truly in a child's best interest to be removed from their parents, this bill ensures that more kids will be placed with supportive families instead of in group homes.

Of course, there is still work to be done. Far too many children still experience the trauma of neglect and abuse, and far too many youth in foster care age out without meaningful connection to a caring adult.

Moving forward, Congress must continue to listen to the voices of foster youth, foster parents, and other advocates by working to find better solutions and secure better outcomes for youth in foster care.

#### JUDICIARY COMMITTEE TRANSCRIPT RELEASE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to address an issue that was brought up by the minority leader on the floor this morning. I want to respond to the false statements made by the very misinformed minority leader this morning—and I mean really misinformed.

He criticized the Judiciary Committee's release this morning of about 2,500 pages of information about the infamous Trump Tower meeting with a Russian lawyer and Donald Trump, Jr.

First, he mischaracterized the release as solely a Republican move. That is false. In fact, that is absolutely false. This release was done with the support of the ranking minority member. On January 25 of this year, at the committee meeting where I announced my desire to release the transcripts, the ranking member publicly supported the decision. I have three quotes. She said, "I am delighted." She said she had "no disagreement." She said, "I am very grateful for your decision to proceed."

Second, he accused me of deciding not to interview two participants in the meeting. That is false. In fact, it is absolutely false. I would like to have interviewed both Mr. Manafort and Mr. Kushner. An interview of Mr. Manafort was scheduled a day before he was raided. We—meaning Senator FEINSTEIN and this Senator—had subpoenaed Mr. Manafort for a committee hearing set for July 26, 2017. Mr. Manafort instead offered to appear voluntarily for a staff interview the day before the hearing, and the ranking member asked me to withdraw the subpoena. Then the FBI raided his home, and Mr. Manafort indicated he would invoke his Fifth Amendment rights and then consequently declined to answer the committee's questions. However, we did review the transcript of his earlier interview with the Intelligence Committee.

The ranking member refused to participate in a voluntary interview when we had the chance. She said Democrats on the committee objected that the scope would be focused on the Trump Tower meeting. For all I know, the minority leader's office objected as well, but political leadership should not be dictating bipartisan committee oversight.

As for Mr. Kushner, he refused to participate in a voluntary interview after the ranking member unilaterally and